

REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection.

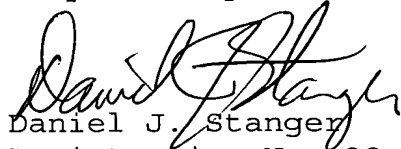
Claim 1-33 are now pending.

Claims 1-8, 11, 18-22, 24-26, and 29-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP11-167603A to Takahiro in view of JP 2000-209424A to Yokokura. Without admitting to the propriety of the rejection, the Applicants submit herewith an accurate English-language translation of Japanese Priority Application 2000-120886, to which the application claims foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. §119. The translation fully supports the rejected claims. Therefore, because the Applicants' perfected foreign priority date antedates the effective U.S. filing date of Yokokura (July 28, 2000), the Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection as being based upon a disclosure that is not prior art to the claims.

New claim 33 claims the feature of calculation of the use charge for sheet recognition, which is not shown in the prior art. Therefore, claims 1-33 are believed to be in allowable condition.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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